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News Release

Bayer's De Ruiter Experience Center expands its role

- New glasshouse for cucumber will be constructed next to one for tomato
- Focus will be on pre-commercial varieties: testing a strong pipeline

10th November 2021 - Bleiswijk, The Netherlands – The De Ruiter Experience Center (DEC) will broaden its horizon to cucumbers in 2022 after previously growing only tomatoes. Many hundreds of new cucumber varieties will be tested every year in a new state-of-the-art glasshouse.

The addition of cucumber to the DEC underlines Bayer's commitment to protected growers and will strengthen its' pipeline. The project is also a next step for the successful partnership between grower BraZander, who will make the investment and own the glasshouse, and Bayer, who will lease and operate it for at least 10 years.

Since 2013, Bayer has been testing new varieties of tomatoes and trialing growing techniques at the DEC, which is located in an area just outside of Rotterdam characterized by the presence of an incredible number of greenhouses. Since 2017, commercial varieties have been grown there as well.

"The project is an exciting next step for Bayer's collaboration with BraZander, an innovative tomato and paprika producer with whom we have an excellent partnership at the DEC," says DEC manager John van der Knaap. "It will also change the whole outlook of the Experience Center by expanding the crops grown and make it even more relevant for the glasshouse sector."

Owner Paul Zantman of BraZander adds: "For us it's a great opportunity to strengthen our cooperation with Bayer and also to expand our knowledge in regards to the production of cucumber, which is a beautiful product."

Technical Setup

The new greenhouse will consist of 3.200 square meters with artificial light (LIT) for highwire and 4.000 square meters of traditional crop. “This testing footprint expansion in state of the art glasshouses will allow us to evaluate our new varieties under commercial conditions,” says Renske Vellekoop, Head of Testing EMEA Protected Glasshouse at Bayer.

The focus will be on pre-commercial varieties: testing our strong pipeline for the future. The newly built glasshouse will help the company’s achieve its sustainability goals as a best practices location.

Consistent with Bayer’s digital transformation strategy, the new glasshouse will be digitally enabled. All data collection on yields will be done using a system called Gearbox. The Gearbox supports growers in their decision making, with cutting edge technology, using smart cameras and software with machine learning. “Gearbox gives valuable insights we never thought would be possible, which gives us a head-start”, says Van der Knaap.

Timing

The construction of the new glasshouse started in November with the intent starting the first crop cycle in May 2022.

More information regarding the expansion of the De Ruiters Experience Center will be made available in the coming months. Learn more at vegetables.bayer.com.

About Bayer

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